

VZCZCXRO9775
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #1203/01 1381344
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 181344Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2164
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8077
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2719
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1955
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5918
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5692
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2304
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001203

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2007

In Today's Papers

CHP, DSP Agree on Election Pact

All papers report following talks on Thursday, opposition parties CHP and DSP leaders Deniz Baykal and Zeki Sezer announced their decision to cooperate in the parliamentary elections to be held July 122. According to the deal between the two parties, DSP candidates will run on the CHP card in the elections without necessarily resigning from their party. Sezer said he will not run for parliament, and added that after the elections, DSP and CHP would continue cooperation as two separate groups in the parliament. The move follows a similar electoral pact between center-right parties Anavatan and DYP as Turkey gears up for the July election.

Former Kurdish MPs' DTP Membership Cancelled; Law on Independent Candidates Approved

All papers report Turkey's Supreme Court Chief Prosecutor's Office has issued an official warning to the mainly Kurdish DTP that former DEP members could not be included on DTP membership rolls. The prosecutor said former [pro-Kurdish] DEP MPs including Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Selim Sadak and Orhan Dogan had been found guilty of terrorism-related charges, making it illegitimate for them to join political parties. The Turkish High Election Board (YSK) will rule whether they can run for parliament as independent candidates in the July 22 general elections.

Meanwhile, President Sezer approved a law that calls for inclusion of names of independent candidates in the combined ballot papers in the general elections. The bill was criticized by commentators for being an attempt to block Kurdish candidates from entering parliament, underlining that enforcement will make it more difficult for the less educated supporters of DTP in east and southeast Turkey to pick out their candidates on an already long and confusing ballot list. Former Kurdish MPs told the press the court made a political decision, stressing they would take the issue to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

Editorial Commentary: Elections

Ali Bayramoglu writes in the Islamist-oriented daily Yeni Safak: "Turkey is heading toward polarization and the picture before or after the elections will not change unless the country resolves its fundamental problems. Normalization is what Turkey needs but it looks like the election mottos of the two leading parties, AKP and CHP, will be 'democracy at stake' and 'regime at stake' respectively. In the election aftermath, regardless of the results Turkey is going to face the Kurdish issue and strong nationalism even though neither of them is a part of the debate right now. The mainly Kurdish DTP decided to run their parliament candidates as independents. However as long as the official policy line regarding the Kurdish issue remains the same, independent (Kurdish) members of parliament run the risk of creating new tension, not solving the issue. If the election process is made tougher for independents, which both the AKP and CHP support, then the Kurdish issue will inevitably lead to a point of growing conflict. Turkish politics is trying to expand itself on one hand while narrowing its limits on the other."

Guneri Civaoglu writes in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "The election alliances on the center right and center left are historically important, and have the potential to change the course of the upcoming elections. In the last elections, in 2002, the DYP had the potential of 30 percent representation in the parliament if it hadn't been for the 10 percent threshold requirement. The alliance by DYP and ANAP as well as DSP and CHP will be able to produce some results which might change Turkey's political destiny. Their cooperation will certainly give a big impetus to unhappy or undecided voters. Given the current situation, it is almost certain that three parties will be represented in the parliament, namely AKP, CHP-DSP, and DYP-ANAP. There is also a strong possibility that MHP will exceed the ten percent threshold and that independent names

ANKARA 00001203 002 OF 002

on behalf of DTP could win. All of those are strong possibilities and remind us of a fact that Turkish politics has witnessed before -- one party, in this case AKP, can enjoy as much as 40 percent of the votes but not have enough seats to be the ruling party."

Operations against PKK along Turkey-Iraq Border Continue
Milliyet, Sabah, Zaman and others: Mainstream Sabah reports that around 20,000 Turkish troops increased their activities in operations against the PKK along the Turkey-Iraq border. In order to prevent the infiltration of PKK terrorists, troops have been deployed at strategic points along the border to form a buffer zone. Many tanks with long-range missiles have been dispatched to the region. Islamist-oriented Zaman says that Turkish Security Forces are on the alert because the PKK's self-declared cease-fire expires on May 18. Mainstream Milliyet reports that the operations are backed by Sikorsky and Cobra helicopters, as well as F-16 jets.

One Year Anniversary of Danistay Assassination Commemorated
All papers report on memorial ceremonies for Yucel Ozbilgin, a member of the Turkish Council of State (Danistay) who was killed in an armed attack one year ago. The Supreme Court did not invite the any members of the AKP government to the ceremony held at the Council of State headquarters.

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul has rejected a proposal coming from the French President Sarkozy to form a "Mediterranean Union," urging the EU to honor its pledges to Turkey.

- The Turkish Parliament has approved a bill to establish new universities in 17 provinces.

- A mass gathering, one in a series of rallies in support of the secular republic, will be held in the Black Sea city of Samsun on May 20.

- The second "Iraq International Fair" will be held in the

southeastern city of Gaziantep from May 23-27 under the auspices of the Iraqi Ministry of Trade and Forum Exhibitions.

International News

- The US State Department confirmed on Thursday senior US and Iranian officials will meet in Baghdad on May 28 to discuss the security situation in Iraq.
- Outgoing British Prime Minister Tony Blair has defended the "special relationship" with the US, warning it would be a "dark day" for Britain if it was ever abandoned by Washington.
- A decades-old rift in the Russian Orthodox Church was mended when Patriarch Alexy II and Metropolitan Laurus, who heads the exiled, New York-based Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, signed Thursday a "historic" unification act in a ceremony in Moscow.
- A report by the Royal Institute for International Affairs says the Iraqi government is now powerless in many parts of the country, warning Iraq faces the distinct possibility of collapse and fragmentation.

WILSON